

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the Abstract with the following amended Abstract:

**ABSTRACT**

~~Apparatus and methods are disclosed by which it is determined which~~  
~~ports in a system can be combined together to form a team and/or whether ports~~  
~~that are already operated as part of a team are eligible to continue to be operated~~  
~~in the team. A network controller system comprising a plurality of network ports~~  
~~and a driver system that operates the plurality of network ports. The driver system~~  
~~determines which of the network ports can be combined together to form a team.~~  
~~Each network port in the team is associated with a different network interface~~  
~~card (NIC). The NICs are associated with a common network address to be used~~  
~~by external network logic.~~